United Nations E/CN.17/2010/10/Add.3

Economic and Social Council

Distr.: General
16 February 2010

Original: English

Commission on Sustainable Development
Eighteenth session
3-14 May 2010
Item 3 of the provisional agenda*
Thematic cluster for the implementation cycle 2010-2011 — review session

Summary by the Chair of the regional implementation meeting for the Economic Commission for Europe region**

Summary

The fourth Economic Commission for Europe (ECE) regional implementation meeting on sustainable development was held on 1 and 2 December 2009 in Geneva. In accordance with the multi-year programme of work of the Commission on Sustainable Development, the meeting assessed the region's progress in implementing sustainable development commitments in the thematic clusters of transport, chemicals management, waste management, mining and sustainable consumption and production patterns. Delegates also addressed cross-cutting issues and linkages between them, and reported on the implementation of decisions taken by the Commission at its seventeenth session. As a basis for discussions, the ECE secretariat had prepared a background note on the aforementioned thematic clusters (ECE/AC.25/2009/3) with contributions from various partners in and outside the United Nations system, including the United Nations Environment Programme; the secretariats of the Basel Convention on the Control of Transboundary Movements of Hazardous Wastes and their Disposal, the Rotterdam Convention on the Prior Informed Consent Procedure for Certain Hazardous Chemicals and Pesticides in International Trade, the Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants; the Montreal Protocol on Substances that Deplete the Ozone Layer; and the Strategic Approach to International Chemicals Management. The secretariat prepared two background documents (ECE/AC.25/2009/4 and ECE/AC.25/2009/5) on education for sustainable development, one of the cross-cutting issues discussed. The outcomes of the discussions are reflected herein.

* E/CN.17/2010/1.

** Previously issued under the symbol ECE/AC.25/2009/2/Add.1.

10-24314 (E) 150310

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I. Overview

1. In preparation for the eighteenth session of the Commission on Sustainable Development, the member States of the Economic Commission for Europe (ECE) and representatives of major groups, United Nations agencies and other international bodies met in Geneva to review the ECE region's progress in implementing sustainable development commitments and goals. The regional implementation meeting examined the following thematic clusters: transport, chemicals management, waste management, mining and the 10-Year Framework of Programmes on Sustainable Consumption and Production Patterns.

2. The meeting focused on evaluating the progress achieved and the obstacles and constraints remaining in each area, the priorities for future activities and strategies, and the interlinkages between the thematic clusters and cross-cutting issues.

3. The background documentation and interventions made at the meeting indicated that progress in sustainable development differed significantly from one subregion to another, and that it was affected by economic, infrastructural and historical aspects that must be taken into account in the regional and global review.

4. While the thematic clusters had their distinct challenges and priorities, some of the cross-cutting issues and interlinkages had particular relevance in the region, including the ongoing introduction and development of education for sustainable development and work on poverty reduction. These should be taken into account and further built upon during discussions on next steps and ways forward for each of the clusters in the regional context.

5. Further progress in the areas discussed required a broad range of policies and measures, including a mix of regulatory and voluntary approaches and the engagement of all stakeholders, including the private sector, to strengthen the work in partnership.

6. In addition, many participants stressed the special importance of sustainable consumption and production as it relates to the other thematic clusters. Sustainable consumption and production should therefore be considered as a cross-cutting issue under the other thematic clusters. Furthermore, it is a process derived directly from the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation.

7. Participants commended the very active involvement of the major groups in the meeting, in terms of both their attendance and their role and engagement in the discussions. They suggested that the Bureau of the Commission on Sustainable Development explore ways to ensure a more interactive dialogue with major groups during the eighteenth session of the Commission.

8. The present summary by the two Chairpersons addresses some of the main issues discussed at the meeting, including major trends, challenges and proposals for the way forward in each thematic area.

II. Transport

9. The transport sector was acknowledged as one of the major contributors to the region's economic development, as it supported trade, employment and development. At the same time, the sector also had significant adverse effects on the environment, including through the level of carbon dioxide emissions, the consumption of fossil

fuels, air and noise pollution and the loss of land and biodiversity. The sector's impacts on the social aspects of the region's development, including health and safety, were also considerable.

10. Participants noted that over the past several decades, significant efforts had been made to promote the sustainability of transport sector policy and investment in both economic and environmental terms. Participants exchanged information on a number of legal, policy and practical measures at the national and local levels aimed at increasing transport sustainability.

11. The importance of developing transport infrastructure and services conducive to sustainable development was highlighted. There was a disparity in the success of transport sustainability efforts between the subregions, with countries in Eastern Europe, the Caucasus and Central Asia and South-Eastern Europe facing major infrastructure, management and funding challenges. Participants noted that with respect to the development and application of global and regional policies and programmes, the specifics of individual subregions should be taken into account through a differentiated approach.

12. There was general agreement that all modes of transport, including motorized vehicles, rail networks, shipping and aviation, should be considered to increase the sector's sustainability. A multimodal approach to transport was key to achieving this goal. However, this would require further investment in infrastructure, for instance to modernize ports, standardize freight containers and improve links between various modes of transport. The advantages of speed rail transport development were also underlined.

13. Many participants noted that a reduction in the use of unsustainable modes of transport, in particular private vehicles, was required to reduce the sector's environmental impacts. A number of examples of efforts to achieve such reduction were provided. Better use of spatial planning to reduce mobility needs and facilitate sustainable transport was seen as a strategic approach. Participants called for strategies combining different polices and measures for avoiding transport where possible (for example, through teleconferencing, other technical solutions and better urban design) and for better coherence between infrastructure investment and spatial planning.

14. A shift to cleaner transport modes was needed. Among the other effective measures identified were: (a) promoting non-motorized means of transport such as walking and cycling; (b) developing supporting infrastructure, including safety measures; and (c) strengthening public transport systems. A targeted shift of freight and passenger traffic from roads to rail could be achieved through a mix of economic incentives for and investment in railway infrastructure.

15. A number of participants stressed the importance of innovation in promoting cleaner technologies and fuels, noting that the ECE region had made significant progress with the reduction of per-vehicle emissions of gaseous pollutants and particulates. At the same time, the level of overall emissions remained high due to the overall increase in the number of vehicles. A strategic approach to the introduction of cleaner and more efficient vehicles was needed at the regional and national levels. This should include proactive innovation policies that support research in alternative fuels and a shift to more efficient technologies, such as electric, hybrid and fuel cell

vehicles. However, some participants raised concerns regarding the production and use of biofuels, due to their impact on land use and to the small quantities produced.

16. Voluntary initiatives of the private sector could also contribute to progress. One example was the voluntary commitment of the road transport industry to reduce carbon dioxide emissions by 30 per cent by 2030, through investments in vehicle technology, driver training and innovative logistic concepts. The greater involvement of ECE countries in global initiatives such as the Partnership for Clean Fuels and Vehicles and the Global Fuel Economy Initiative, which promoted technology and knowledge exchange, was seen as beneficial in this regard.

17. While the development and market introduction of alternative fuel vehicles helped to reduce carbon dioxide emissions from transport, the availability of no-carbon electricity was one of the areas in which participants called for policy action. In that connection, energy production methods and energy efficiency in transport needed to be considered, along with improvements in vehicle technology and infrastructure management.

18. Several speakers noted that sustainable transport solutions should be tied to the opportunities afforded by the current economic crisis, for example by orienting stimulus packages towards the development of sustainable public transport infrastructure. Economic tools such as stimulus packages and business incentives, as well as disincentives (for example, kilometre charges for vehicles) and the internalization of external costs needed to be applied to promote sustainable transport models.

19. Participants noted that subregional and regional cooperation was important for building sustainable transport infrastructure, promoting multi-country infrastructure planning and developing common infrastructure standards. Exchanges of experience and technology transfer to less developed countries in the region with respect to such issues as sustainable transport infrastructure were also necessary, in particular for areas with specific transport challenges, such as mountainous regions.

20. Participants voiced their support for the Transport, Health and Environment Pan-European Programme, through which the key challenges to achieving sustainable transport patterns were being addressed. The programme was also encouraging national and local Governments to pursue an integrated approach to policymaking and was helping to put sustainable mobility at the forefront of the international agenda.

21. Finally, a number of speakers highlighted the importance of public awareness and educational initiatives aimed at promoting and facilitating behavioural change. These included increased non-motorized transport and public transport use, especially in urban areas.

III. Chemicals management

22. The meeting noted that the chemical industry had significant economic importance for many ECE countries, with Western Europe, the Russian Federation, the United States of America and Canada ranking among the largest chemical producers in the world. With the consumption and production of chemicals continuing to grow globally, the sector's impact on the environment and social considerations in the ECE region made sound chemicals management one of the key

priorities. The Goal of the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation to minimize the adverse effects of chemical production on human health and the environment by 2020 therefore held particular significance for the region.

23. While chemicals were an important driver of economic growth and a source of support for livelihoods, participants recognized the enormous danger posed by chemicals in the absence of sound chemicals management, which was considered to be a key component of corporate social and environmental responsibility and an important factor in sustainable development.

24. The meeting identified a number of critical challenges for sound chemicals management: (a) increasing chemical manufacturing and use, in particular in developing countries; (b) increasing product development and production; and (c) growing food production, accompanied by corresponding increases in chemical fertilizer and pesticide usage. In the ECE region, additional challenges were posed by legacy chemicals, such as lead paints and asbestos, and by hazardous waste sites.

25. Many participants stressed the adverse impact of obsolete chemicals, in particular obsolete persistent organic pollutants and pesticides, on human and animal health and the environment. They emphasized the need to raise international awareness of this issue and to discuss it during the current cycle of the Commission on the basis of reports from the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations and other relevant organizations, agencies and institutions.

26. Many participants highlighted the need to decrease chemicals use in agriculture through sustainable agricultural practices, in particular organic farming, and to soundly manage the use, transportation and storage of chemicals.

27. At the policy level, sound chemicals management could be efficiently addressed by chemicals management being included in national sustainable development and poverty reduction strategies as well as country assistance strategies. The meeting emphasized the linkages between the goals of eradicating poverty and ensuring the sound management of chemicals. Participants also underlined that the same rules and safety standards for chemicals production and management should be applied in all parts of the world.

28. In view of the continuing increase in the production and use of chemicals, as well as the introduction of new ones, a number of participants considered it likely that global regulation of chemicals of concern would be needed in the future. Hence, further development and possible expansion of global chemicals conventions would need to be undertaken. Certain persistent organic pollutants were now regulated globally, but other chemicals of concern were not. Participants commended the decision to begin negotiations on a global convention on mercury.

29. The meeting recognized the need for more international cooperation to increase knowledge and access to information with respect to the presence of hazardous substances in products, such as electronic equipment and toys, and to reduce risk during their handling and disposal. Participants acknowledged that the information needed to conduct risk assessments was lacking for many chemical-containing products now available on the global market.

30. The meeting reiterated the importance of furthering implementation of the Strategic Approach to International Chemicals Management, an important framework for strengthening capacity for sound chemicals management that narrowed the

capacity gap between the developing and the developed worlds. The meeting recognized that through the Strategic Approach, significant progress had been made against the 2020 goal. The objectives of the Strategic Approach should be attained through partnerships between Governments and major groups, including the private sector, labour, the academic community and non-governmental organizations. A major remaining challenge for implementing the Strategic Approach was to secure sustainable long-term financial resources. Regional meetings and coordination mechanisms had played and would continue to play an important role in helping regional stakeholders advance the process. Participants highlighted the linkages between Strategic Approach and the Commission, pointing out that the two processes could mutually reinforce each other in efforts to achieve the 2020 goal.

31. To achieve the 2020 goal, including through implementing global chemicals agreements, strong political commitment and financial resources were needed. However, the broad, cross-sectoral scope of sound chemicals management meant that there was no single solution for financing its implementation; various funding partners and solutions were necessary. Participants acknowledged the urgent need to explore the role of the private sector in providing financial support for the sound global management of chemicals.

32. The meeting noted the importance of implementing the Globally Harmonized System of Classification and Labelling of Chemicals and recommended adopting a global system of recognizing and communicating risks and hazards.

33. A number of participants informed the meeting about work under way in countries and organizations to find safer alternatives to chemicals that posed a risk. They stressed the need to make this knowledge available to countries in transition and to developing countries. The meeting welcomed initiatives to improve product stewardship by industry.

34. The meeting acknowledged in particular the voluntary initiatives of the International Council of Chemical Associations, for example the Responsible Care Global Charter and the Global Product Strategy, as essential contributions to the Strategic Approach and as improving the sound global management of chemicals. It welcomed the plans of the International Council: (a) establish a base set of hazard and exposure information adequate for conducting safety assessments of all chemicals in commerce; (b) improve global capacity to implement best assessment practices and management procedures, especially in developing countries; (c) share relevant product information with co-producers, Governments and the public; and (d) make information on chemicals publicly available through the Council's Global Product Strategy-information technology portal.

35. The meeting took note of efforts by many countries in the region to advance sound chemicals management through new horizontal legislation that covered the registration, evaluation, authorization and restriction of chemicals using a life cycle approach. European Union legislation, for instance, could be split into a number of self-standing modules that could be of interest to countries when they created their own chemicals legislation. Responsibility had shifted from Governments having to prove risks to manufacturers, importers and downstream users having to ensure that the substances they developed, used and placed on the market did not harm human health or the environment.

36. The meeting emphasized the importance of the precautionary approach in reducing chemical risk. In particular, the need for a continuous reassessment and risk management of currently registered pesticides (for example, storage and disposal of pesticides) and the review of new pesticides was highlighted. Managing and reducing the risk of industrial chemicals could be achieved by setting strict conditions on the production, processing, use, import or disposal of a new chemical before it entered into commerce, and also on the significant new use of an existing chemical. A comprehensive set of data and information about a chemical should be made available to regulators and users before that chemical was sold in accordance with the "no data, no market" rule. With respect to nanoscale materials, steps needed to be taken to assess their risks.

37. Delegates stressed the importance of public access to information on chemicals (the "right to know"). Companies should be obliged to make publicly available data on the health and environmental effects of produced or imported chemicals. Databases on toxic chemical releases should also be made available to the public and be reported annually. Furthermore, public access to information should be increased through public notices and meetings. In the ECE region, the Protocol on Pollutant Release and Transfer Registers to the Convention on Access to Information, Public Participation in Decision-making and Access to Justice in Environmental Matters (Aarhus Convention) had entered into force on 8 October 2009. It was the first such legally binding international instrument to enable access to information and information-sharing on chemicals and could serve as a model for other regions.

38. With regard to capacity-building, the meeting recognized the usefulness of sharing good practices. It noted the role of cleaner production centres in building capacity for sound chemicals management.

IV. Waste management

39. The meeting recognized the significant impact that waste and hazardous waste had on the environment, human health and security. Sound integrated waste management was therefore among the key preconditions for sustainable development. It was also required for the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals, in particular the sanitation- and health-related targets. The ECE region was among the major generators of waste globally, with the amount of waste continuing to increase, although the rate of increase differed from country to country and between subregions.

40. Participants noted that significant progress had been made in many parts of the region through the implementation of global and regional multilateral environmental agreements. Waste policies in the European Union and North America had been successful in moving from addressing landfill use to tackling waste prevention efforts and waste recovery operations. However, the success of such policies had been diminished owing to overall economic growth, which in turn had resulted in increased waste generation.

41. With this increase across the region, a policy shift towards a resource-efficient economy, including a shift from waste management to sustainable material management, was required. This would necessitate strong interlinkages to sustainable consumption and production approaches and policies that took into account the life cycle approach.

42. Participants underlined the importance of promoting a clear waste hierarchy with the following features:

(a) Prevention should be the first and optimal solution. Prevention strategies should be based on the "polluter pays" principle, include extended producer responsibility and be addressed using a life cycle product management approach beginning in the design phase;

(b) Unpreventable waste should be recycled. To facilitate this approach, separation as well as separate collection of waste should be put into practice;

(c) Energy recovery in the waste recycling process could be another means of effective resource use after reuse or recycling;

(d) Disposal should be restricted as much as possible to waste that could not be reused or recycled. Legislative and regulatory measures were required to restrict landfills of recyclable and, in particular, biodegradable waste and to limit waste combustion (with the exception of specific categories such as medical waste). The treatment of waste (for example, biodegradation) was seen as a good solution for reducing the waste going to landfills.

43. Many participants highlighted the important role that local authorities played in waste management policymaking and implementation, and emphasized the social aspects that needed to be addressed, such as the low status of workers in the waste sector and the health hazards linked to garbage collection by women and children.

44. Awareness-raising and education, in particular to enable consumers to sort household waste, as well as legislative, permitting and financial instruments, were of crucial importance if the above objectives were to be reached. Many participants noted the cross-cutting role of promoting sustainable consumption and production.

45. The meeting discussed particular categories of waste that posed challenges across the region. These included:

(a) Electronic waste, the generation of which was one of the fastest growing segments of the waste stream. Concerns were not limited to the challenges this trend posed for waste management and recycling. The trade in and export of e-waste to developing countries and countries with economies in transition for reuse, recovery and recycling, sometimes at facilities that did not operate under sound environmental and heath safety conditions, was also a major issue. In this regard, the global workplan on electronic waste recently adopted under the Basel Convention provided a way forward for international policy on the environmentally sound management of e-waste;

(b) A long-term strategy was needed to deal with radioactive waste, which posed specific challenges in the region due to the intensive use of radioactive materials, including in the energy, military and research areas. Transportation of radioactive waste required stricter international regulation. A life cycle approach to radioactive products should also be considered at the policy level;

(c) Plastic waste disposal, including in the oceans, posed a very significant problem, not only for human health but also for the food chain and wildlife. There was a need to address the issue at the global level;

(d) Similarly, organic waste reuse had not been sufficiently addressed in international forums. Failure to separate biodegradable waste had led to greenhouse

gas emissions from landfills. Experiences in some of the region's countries demonstrated that organic waste collected separately at the source could be used to produce high-quality compost or energy through fermentation with continued composting. The latter could contribute to soil fertility and reduce the impacts on climate by averting methane emissions and sequestering carbon in the soil.

46. Many speakers addressed life cycle product management, noting that synergies should be strengthened at the international level in the ongoing work on chemicals management under the Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm conventions. Work on life cycle chemicals management under the Strategic Approach to International Chemicals Management was considered to be of particular relevance.

47. Participants from some countries with economies in transition reported particular challenges in waste management. Production of waste was rising, owing to improving economic conditions in those countries and their reliance on natural resource extraction. Those countries were also suffering from the accumulation of hazardous waste (for example, radioactive, military and industrial waste and obsolete pesticides) generated in the past. Specific programmes and technologies were needed to safely treat and finally dispose of that waste. Legal ownership of the stockpiles could not be clearly established, and many of the countries did not have the financial or technical capacity to address the issue.

48. Eastern Europe, the Caucasus and Central Asia also faced particular difficulties in ensuring the separation of waste, in particular municipal and hazardous waste, and the separation of packaging waste. Countries did not have access to modern recycling and reuse technology or to equipment for waste collection and transportation, or for treatment of electronic or other specialized waste. In this regard, they required assistance to improve national legislation and develop national hazardous waste minimization and management plans. Technical assistance, particularly in the form of experience-sharing and the transfer of up-to-date waste management technology, was of special importance for the subregion.

V. Mining

49. The meeting acknowledged the important contribution of mining to society, as it provided essential minerals and was the source of many raw materials. The importance of mining varied across the ECE region, with the sector being of great importance to the economies of several countries. Participants noted that the region's mines were among the deepest and most efficient in the world, and that it was a leading global supplier of mining technology.

50. At the same time, mining had considerable adverse effects on the environment and society. The main environmental concerns were related to water use and quality, waste rock dumps, tailings storage areas and hazardous materials. The main social concerns were related to land acquisition, indigenous peoples and cultural heritage, and labour and working conditions.

51. Participants noted that the principal challenge of more sustainable mining was to transform mineral resource potential while at the same time creating sustainable benefits, addressing social needs and protecting the environment. Mining could and should contribute to sustainable development, but the industry needed to address environmental and social concerns and promote measures to create lasting benefits.

Among the main environmental considerations were land use planning, waste management, ecosystem risk management and mine closure and rehabilitation. In addition, good governance, with transparency and accountability, was an essential prerequisite for sustainable mining practices and for the adoption of corporate social and environmental responsibility approaches.

52. Opportunities for sustainable mining were growing in the region, with increased exploration, improved available data, newer technologies and changed economic conditions. The meeting noted the intention of one country to develop, for the nineteenth session of the Commission, a policy proposal on the contribution of mining to sustainable development. In the ECE region, the countries of South-Eastern Europe and Central Asia faced the greatest challenges in terms of sustainable mining.

53. The meeting agreed that good practices in mining required multi-stakeholder consultation and dialogues which, in turn, called for greater transparency, efforts to make information accessible to decision makers and the broader public, and a commitment to ensuring corporate social responsibility and embracing environmental stewardship. With respect to environmental concerns, good practices should include environmental assessments throughout the entire life cycle, long-term monitoring, and protection and enhancement of biodiversity and land. Long-term planning, including strategic environmental assessment, at all stages was the key to successful outcomes.

54. The meeting took note of a number of initiatives promoting sustainable mining. These included the Resource Endowment Initiative and the European Commission guidance on development of mining activities in the Natura 2000 Networking Programme. Several activities had been undertaken at ECE to address specific problems related to mining activities. Safety guidelines and good practices for tailings management facilities had been developed in 2008 under the ECE Convention on the Transboundary Effects of Industrial Accidents and Convention on the Protection and Use of Transboundary Watercourses and International Lakes. The guidelines supported efforts by Governments and stakeholders to limit the number of accidents at tailings management facilities and the severity of their consequences for human health and the environment. Recognizing the many benefits associated with the coal mine methane recovery, ECE, with support from the Environmental Protection Agency of the United States and in close cooperation with the Methane to Markets Partnership, had launched a programme in 2004 to promote best practices and provide technical assistance in planning, designing and financing coal mine methane projects.

55. In the framework of the Environment and Security Initiative, several projects had been launched to assess the security risks of tailings sites in South-Eastern Europe and Central Asia.

56. At the global level, the Intergovernmental Forum on Mining, Minerals, Metals and Sustainable Development had been established in 2005 to improve, enhance and promote the contribution of mining to sustainable development. The Forum was working to develop a policy framework for mining that would be delivered to the Commission in 2011.

57. Participants noted that improvements in the mining sector required particular efforts by the mining industry and the involvement of other key stakeholders. The International Council on Mining and Metals had been established as a platform for

industry and other key stakeholders to share experiences and develop solutions based on sound science and sustainable development principles. Furthermore, the European Technology Platform on Sustainable Mineral Resources had been established to strengthen minerals sector technology and minimize its footprint.

58. Regarding the measures needed to avoid the spreading to other regions of mining impacts on environment and human health, several solutions were proposed, including: (a) the adoption of national integrated raw-materials policies; (b) the application of integrated cross-sectoral approaches to land-use management; (c) the promotion of a more sustainable raw materials supply within countries; and (d) support for innovation and competition for investment by mining companies.

59. Participants stressed the need for effective and efficient approaches to the funding of mine closures, in particular to ensure the environmental safety of closed mines. Strengthening certification systems in the mining sector and encouraging extractive companies to consider self-regulation would contribute to sustainable development and poverty eradication. Mechanisms should be established to promote capacity-building, the exchange of experiences, the identification and dissemination of best practices and the creation of an appropriate knowledge base on mineral resources. The need to better integrate biodiversity conservation goals into national mineral extraction plans was also highlighted.

VI. 10-Year Framework of Programmes on Sustainable Consumption and Production Patterns

60. Discussions on this theme built upon the outcomes of the preparatory meeting on sustainable consumption and production for the fourth regional implementation meeting. That informal regional meeting, held on 30 November 2009, had been organized by the United Nations Environment Programme with the support of ECE. Meeting participants recognized that sustainable consumption and production, in addition to being an important priority for the ECE region, was both an overarching objective of, and a prerequisite for, sustainable development. The need to support and strengthen the broad range of ongoing activities and policies contributing to sustainable consumption and production, and to build subregional, regional and international cooperation was highlighted. This was especially important given the scale of the undertaking required to decrease the negative impacts of current consumption and production patterns. The informal meeting also helped to identify areas for further programmes and policies for sustainable consumption and production, whose design and implementation could be supported by the 10-Year Framework of Programmes on Sustainable Consumption and Production Patterns.

61. Participants in the informal meeting also recognized that the promotion of sustainable consumption and production and the implementation of a future 10-year framework of programmes could support a shift to a green economy and should also play a key role in supporting social development and the fulfilment of the Millennium Development Goals.

62. During the meeting, participants reviewed some of the challenges and achievements relating to the shift to sustainable consumption and production. Practical experience had shown that a move to sustainable consumption and production could: (a) deliver important social benefits; (b) enable countries,

companies and communities to "do more and better, with less"; and (c) increase net welfare gains from economic activities by reducing resource use and depletion as well as pollution.

63. During the discussions, participants noted that actions to promote sustainable consumption and production could be a powerful lever for turning environmental and social challenges into business and employment opportunities. A shift to sustainable consumption and production could also create greener and more decent jobs and support poverty alleviation. This potential should be more clearly communicated to all stakeholders.

64. Many participants highlighted the importance and urgency of developing a common vision, a strategy, clear targets and a time frame for implementing sustainable consumption and production activities. This would help to support the transition to an eco-efficient economy and to bridge the gaps between developing and industrialized countries.

65. Participants recognized that promoting and implementing sustainable consumption and production required innovative policies, with a balanced mix of instruments and incentives (regulatory, voluntary, economic and fiscal), as these instruments might not work effectively if they were applied individually. Policy packages should also address environmental and social impacts across the whole life cycle of products. Close cooperation between stakeholders was necessary, including key ministries (environment, finance, industry and social affairs), to ensure the integration and coherence of policies and programmes.

66. Examples of the following effective policies and practices for promoting sustainable consumption and production were mentioned: (a) policies for integrated pollution prevention and control; (b) legislation promoting eco-design for energy use and energy-related products; (c) environmental labelling; and (d) sustainable public procurement. Participants presented national strategies and action plans, focusing on education guidelines and toolkits for national campaigns and awareness-raising with respect to sustainable consumption and production. A number of participants emphasized the importance of green and sustainable public procurement and its potential to accelerate the shift to sustainable consumption and production, given that Governments were themselves major consumers of goods and services.

67. Many countries in the region had been active in the Marrakech Process, launched in response to the decision on sustainable consumption and production taken in Johannesburg in 2002 at the World Summit on Sustainable Development. Within the Marrakech Process, several topics had received particular attention following the creation of task forces on such topics as education for sustainable consumption, and sustainable lifestyles, tourism, products, buildings and construction and procurement. This was a good indication of what many countries considered to be the key sectors, topics or policy instruments that should be addressed under the 10-Year Framework of Programmes.

68. Challenges highlighted by participants included: (a) how to address the "rebound effect", by which growing consumption had been outstripping efficiency gains and technological improvements; (b) how to work more effectively on the demand side to reorient consumers' behaviour and purchasing choices; (c) evaluating and internalizing external short- and long-term costs of production;

and (d) the need to go beyond a "business-as-usual" approach to achieve the shift to sustainable consumption and production.

69. Participants also highlighted the need to: (a) strengthen the work on the scientific knowledge base for policy and action relating to sustainable consumption and production; (b) accelerate technological leapfrogging; and (c) establish regional and subregional platforms for collaboration.

70. Many participants supported the development and implementation of a 10-year framework, recommending that it be ambitious and comprise: (a) a declaration outlining a common vision for all countries regarding the need to promote sustainable consumption and production, with a defined framework for programme fields, overall goals in each field and an implementing structure; and (b) a series of programmes for sustainable consumption and production, with specific objectives and time frames, means of implementation, sectors and actors.

71. A number of participants highlighted the need to establish funding mechanisms to support the delivery of these programmes.

72. The following priority areas for work on sustainable consumption and production and for inclusion in the 10-Year Framework were proposed: (a) production processes; (b) sustainable products (including support for eco-design); (c) sustainable consumption and living; (d) financial incentives and policies to encourage public and private investment in sustainable consumption and production; (e) the provision of more science-based knowledge, including by drawing on the work of the International Panel for Sustainable Resource Management; (f) assistance in designing and implementing national strategies and action plans; and (g) horizontal strategies at the different governmental and intergovernmental levels to integrate sustainable consumption and production policies into sustainable development strategies and plans. Specific programmes under the 10-Year Framework could be defined in each of these fields. Participants also identified a number of priority sectors: mobility and transport, housing and construction, food, waste management, sustainable cities and sustainable tourism.

73. One participant mentioned that the 10-Year Framework should be much more comprehensive and systematic than the list of topics generated through the Marrakech Process. In this regard, it was important to learn the priorities of all countries in the process leading up to the nineteenth session of the Commission, and to define how and by whom the programmes making up the 10-Year Framework would be implemented. A related question was how existing regional or subregional sustainable consumption and production programmes could be scaled up.

74. Other key points raised included: (a) the importance of applying corporate environmental and social responsibility; (b) the need for policies and incentives to promote innovation by the private sector and other stakeholders for sustainable consumption and production; and (c) the need to bolster existing financial mechanisms to encourage investment for the shift to sustainable consumption and production.

75. Education for sustainable consumption, as part of education for sustainable development, was also recognized as a key objective that should be supported by the future 10-Year Framework of Programmes. Participants also recommended using the road map on education for sustainable consumption developed by the Marrakech Task Force to guide implementation of education programmes.

VII. Cross-cutting issues, interlinkages and implementation of decisions made by the Commission at its seventeenth session

A. Progress in implementing the decisions made by the Commission at its seventeenth session

76. The meeting noted the importance not only of focusing on the upcoming session of the Commission, but also of tracking progress in the implementation of the policy-related decisions of the Commission at its seventeenth session. Consequently, participants exchanged information on national and international activities in the current cycle. Successful examples were presented, such as: (a) the sustainability and stewardship programmes; (b) research in the area of agricultural systems and sustainability; (c) programmes aimed at strengthening urban-rural linkages; and (d) national-level sustainable development work with key stakeholders, such as farmers, forest managers, non-governmental organizations and local Governments.

77. Participants mentioned a number of international initiatives that supported implementation of the Commission's decisions, including the Global Partnership on Nutrient Management and the World Food Summit process. An intergovernmental platform on biodiversity and ecosystem services had been set up to address desertification and biodiversity loss. With regard to Africa, concrete partnerships between regional organizations and the African Union were being focused on specific priority areas such as climate change, peace and security, and the promotion of science and research.

B. Cross-cutting issues and interlinkages

78. The meeting highlighted the importance of interlinkages between the thematic clusters, noting the improved implementation of the policy options that built upon the resulting synergies. Participants pointed out that rather than isolating individual substantive issues on the Commission's agenda, policies should be focused on the interlinked nature of sustainable development.

79. Mining, transport, sustainable consumption and production and waste management were major stages in the life cycle of materials and areas that had many potential impacts on human health, employment and the environment. In this respect, participants noted that sustainable transport played an important role in ensuring effective communications, trade and migration, while having the lowest possible impact on the environment. Also, the safe production and use of chemicals was vital to protecting human health and worker safety.

80. Eradicating poverty, protecting and managing natural resources and changing unsustainable patterns of production and consumption were the three main cross-cutting sustainable development concerns that required urgent action to protect the planet's human and environmental capital. Countries had adopted a range of specific goals and targets to tackle these issues of concern and had made some progress in managing them directly. While some participants felt that sustainable, "green" growth was a driving force for sustainable development, others saw the concept of sustainable growth as being incompatible with the objective of reducing overall resource use.

81. Participants emphasized the importance of improving education, especially given its cross-cutting nature. They also noted the important role of ongoing national and regional work on education for sustainable development in addressing the issues under the thematic clusters. By incorporating sustainable development themes into the formal education of youth, and by influencing adults and communities through informal education and non-formal means, such as vocational training and capacity-building, education for sustainable development could act as a key instrument for empowering sustainable societies. A number of participants stressed the important role of the United Nations Decade of Education for Sustainable Development and the ECE Strategy for Education for Sustainable Development. The meeting took note of successful examples in the application of education for sustainable development to promote sustainable consumption and production.

82. Participants underlined the importance of policy coherence and of incorporating the cross-cutting themes into national and regional sustainable development strategies, country poverty reduction strategies and assistance programmes.

83. Finally, participants considered that coherence should be maintained between the work of the Commission and a number of important global multilateral environmental agreements and processes, and that further cooperation and coordination between international institutions and multilateral environmental agreements should be promoted.